

## THE COMMUNITY

**6.1 Environmentally Sustainable Planning and Design**

The Master Plan for Northside incorporates the wise principals of stewardship of the environment through sustainable design. The site concept works comfortably with the rolling topography of the site. By concentrating the development area, over 35% of the site remains in permanent open space in the form of natural open areas and parks of a variety of sizes and uses. This exceeds the City requirement of 30% by over 5%. Neighborhood parks including the dedicated sports park, the central village park and numerous smaller “pocket parks” are spread throughout the neighborhood. Storm water retention, cleansing and dispersal will use the latest techniques in sustainable engineering, including bio-filtration and surface retention rather than buried tanks and unsightly and dangerous storm water devices. Reduced run-off will reduce the offsite impacts of storm water. Existing vegetation, including several heritage trees will be retained as much as possible and incorporated as the focus of park areas.

Roads and streets bring a new standard of environmental stewardship as well as increased safety to residents. By incorporating narrower street widths throughout Northside, storm water run-off is reduced, thereby requiring smaller and less costly retention and cleansing processes. These narrower streets also mean slower traffic throughout Northside and safer streets for pedestrians and children. All street sections meet accepted national standards for

fire protection and emergency service delivery. In the implementation of this “safe streets” planning approach, the proposed street layout provides the City-required right of way for the Progress Street collector road, but substitutes a single two way pavement for the divided, wider boulevard section through out the neighborhood. National statistics have shown that a separated and wider pavement section, such as the previously approved Progress Street boulevard section, encourages much higher traffic speeds, which would be a threat to pedestrian safety in the Northside village neighborhood.

**6.2 Housing Alternatives**

A broad spectrum of housing alternatives will be available at Northside, many at housing prices unavailable in other parts of the City and County. By concentrating development and by providing smaller but highly functional lots, land development costs are reduced and lot prices for both single and multi-family homes can be kept lower. View lots and park frontage lots will provide sites for mid-range housing as well, bringing to Blacksburg a balanced neighborhood of homes in a wide variety of market rate price ranges, from affordable to mid range.

**6.3 Community Character**

The architectural character of Northside is modeled on the attractive, older neighborhoods in Blacksburg. The architectural design of the homes, community

center and office/commercial structures will draw upon the rich and varied styles that typify many of Virginia’s historic communities. A blend of Colonial, Farmstead, Craftsman, Prairie and European-inspired styles will provide variety and a warm charm to the neighborhood. Garages will be accessed either from a parking lane to the rear of the homes, or from a front driveway leading to garages pulled well back from the front of each dwelling. This frees the streetscape from the domineering presence of cars and garage doors to be a pedestrian friendly environment, with front porches and friendly windows greeting passers-by. Curbs, planter strips and sidewalks will line streets, with a well-planned and integrated pattern of street trees. Home types will be intermixed, as they often were in historic communities, with large and small homes, attached and detached, sharing the parks and streetscape. High quality landscaping will compliment the architecture and blend the community into its rolling site.

Northside, Blacksburg’s front door for visitors and townspeople arriving from the north, will be the fulfillment of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan vision. From the words of the Comprehensive Plan, “The town’s front door provides a sophisticated, attractive first impression for Blacksburg.”